412 (*eché*), hoe (*asron*), machete (*machit*), coa (*luk*), and digging stick (*avutel*). In a 243 few towns (Amatenango), where lands are [409] flat, the plow is made of wood and pulled by oxen but only for wheat farming. During [415] corn planting, the seed is carried by the [824] planter in a *morral* hung from the shoulder, [237] in a gourd with a large spout, or in containers made of armadillo shells. The harvested crops are placed in deep baskets, made of reed-grass, or in big pita (*chojak*) [412] net bags. The ear of corn is cleared of its [287] husk by a sharp bone or a small deer horn.

322 412 The axe, machete, and knife are used in wood working, which is very rudimentary, though handsaw and hammer have a place. With these tools the Indians make doors, tables, seats, small benches, shelves. Blom [534] and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:351) add that the Tzeltal near Ocosingo also make violins of a shape similar to the European type, but they have no resonance and poor tone. They also manufacture pipes and combs roughly [463] finished. No village of this group has specialists in carpentry to compare with the Chamulas (Tzotzil-speaking), who supply furniture at low cost to San Cristobal de las Casas and other places of the area.

324 412 Stone carving requires a pickaxe with one end very sharp, the other very flat to serve as a hammer, and a short wooden handle. This is the tool used in Tenejapa for making metates. These metates have three legs, but Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:338) mention metates without legs (Ocosingo municipio) which are made of volcanic stone found along the San Martin River. According to the Tzeltal of Oxchuc, the name of the metate is *chá*, its handle *kab-chá*.

412 An iron bar to break the ground, an axe, and a machete are the tools for building huts, chickencoops, sweat houses, and other small structures.

283 413 Another tool, used in the making of pita rope, is *karet*, which probably comes from the Spanish *carreta*. It consists of a wooden disc fixed to a tree trunk that is nailed to

[P 206-A]

Handcrafts

323 [462] Among the few handcrafts practiced in the Tzeltal areas, ceramics, produced mainly by women, is the most widespread. Tenango [184] and Amatenango del Valle are the only communities which have made a specialty of this craft. Tenango exports its products [439] through the northern zone, Amatenango through the southern zone, including neighboring Guatemalan villages. Both places use 323 184 a similar ceramic technique but different shape and ornamentation. Referring to Amatenango del Valle, Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:396) state:

> The pottery, which is their chief product, is almost all of one shape; a sphere, with three handles and a narrow bottle-neck with a flat lip. The decoration does not vary. Both shape and design, however, are of considerable charm. The polish is fine and smooth, giving an even golden-red colour all over, with the decoration in a deep, reddish brown. No such fine, finished work is done by other tribes in the area. The pots are baked by placing them on a rectangle of boards, two or more meters square, around a hot fire. The woman in charge turns them until they are done. These pots are carried by [438] [439] the men as far as San Cristóbal, where they are redistributed, and to Nenton in Guatemala.

283 286 [438] Another widespread craft is spinning and weaving of fabrics for clothing. No village in the Tzeltal area trades these products because production barely meets their family needs. The backstrap loom of pre-Hispanic origin is the chief tool.

[184] Pita articles—ropes, bags, and nets to gather the harvest or carry loads—are mainly produced in Oxchuc and Cancuc. 322 184 In Cancuc wooden combs are also manufactured.

342 *Houses and Furniture*

Houses, from 3 to 5 m. on a side, are predominantly square with thatched roofs. The walls are wattle-and-daub or plain tree trunks tied with vines. Floors are of [354] hardened earth. The houses only have one door and no windows, except in some vil-

[P 207-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

285 being an average of only three strands to a centimeter, with the splints about three centimeters apart. Ordinarily the widest part of the basket is at the rim, but a very small basket, *tutemOtc*, was observed, in which the greater diameter was about half-way up the side. The weave was the same. The standard large size is 23 centimeters high, 36 centimeters diameter at the rim, and 13 at the base (fig. 304).

286 [482] The men also make the nets, *tcotcaH*, which are used, suspended from one shoulder, as a pocket, or, slung from a tump-line, to carry small burdens. They are made of hennequen or ixtla cord. The mouth is an extra heavy string, from which the woven part of the net hangs (fig. 305). The method of laying the cord was observed

[285]

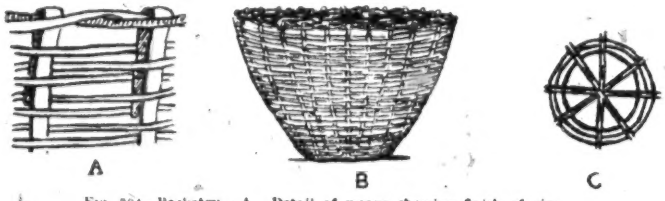

FIG. 304—Basketry. A. Detail of weave showing finish of rim. B. Basket, height 23 c.m. C. Arrangement of splints at the bottom.

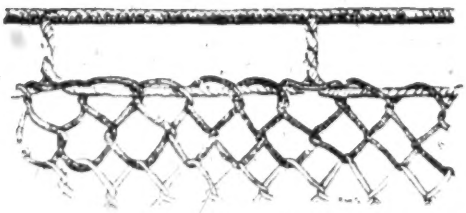

FIG. 305—Detail of Net.

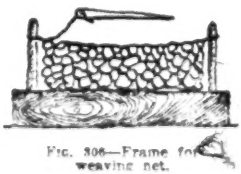

FIG. 306—Frame for weaving net.

at Cancuc. The istla threads are held in the crotch of the left knee, and the cord is wound on the thigh with a flat-hand, rubbing motion. A bundle of threads laid parallel to each other, is taken by the middle and rolled into the already made cord, forming two strands. When the strands are ready, they are laid together with a reverse-stroke of the hand on the thigh. The net is woven with a deer-horn needle, *muk*, on a frame, *tiaH*, consisting of a board about 18 centimeters long with an upright stick at each end (fig. 306). The actual weaving was not observed.

322 Considering that their only tools are their machetes, and an occasional cheap pocket knife, the wood-working done by the men is

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

remarkable. They make combs of one piece of wood, averaging 15 centimeters long, 8 wide, by 4 millimeters thick. The teeth are cut out of one of the long sides, running back less than half-way into the body of the piece. These teeth may be as fine as two in three millimeters, or as coarse as two in five millimeters; sometimes they are graded. The back is slightly arched. On the ends a piece of wood is left uncut, usually about four millimeters wide. The shape is not unlike the small Japanese combs to be found in most of our curio stores. The best examples are made from mahogany, chosen with a nice feeling for the effect of the grain. They are not worn, but used for combing the hair.

They make violins which are small copies of the European type. The instrument and bow are known by their Spanish names, *violina* and *arcilla*. The body is about 26 centimeters in greatest length and width; the neck, *tsutsuH-te*, projects about 50 centimeters. Save for a decoration of wavy lines on the back, the violin looks like a cheap toy fiddle. The strings, *tcucuix*, are of *mico de noche* (night-walking lemur) gut, save the G-string, which is of the usual type, bought in the towns. The bow-strings are of horse-hair treated with rosin. The tone is poor, lacking resonance.

One tobacco pipe, *bum*, was observed, which was a remarkable piece of whittling (fig. 307). It was about 14 centimeters long, made of one piece of mahogany, and apparently modeled after the American corn-cobs occasionally seen among the Ladinos. The bowl was roughly rounded, with a flat bottom. The stem was round, with a step in it at the middle, in imitation of the step in the mouth-piece of an ordinary pipe. The tube had been hollowed out with a hot wire. The tin-foil cap over the cork of a *Habanero* bottle had been hammered onto the base of the bowl, and two strips of tin-foil laid around the stem, each held on with a brad. It may be mentioned that the mahogany coloured prettily from handling and smoking, and that the flavour was sweet.

FIG. 307.—Pipe.

Stools, with three legs let into a single, round piece, and rather rickety tables on the same principle, but four-legged, are made by the men, as well as the squatting-seats mentioned in describing the house.

Game furnishes an important part of the Indian's food supply. Wild boar, deer, howler monkey, *faisan*, *cojolite*, dove, and quail are hunted for food. The various large cats, alligator, lemurs, and many of the larger snakes are sought for their hides, which form a considerable article of trade. The chief weapon used in hunting is

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

124 and her three words of Spanish. Then she grew hostile, answering
123 everything with a plaintive "*Ma snaa*," "I don't know." This went on for two or three minutes, then suddenly she flung open the door and waved me out with no uncertain gesture, saying something about the "Presidente Municipal," and the "Secretario." By this time it was pouring cats and dogs, but there was nothing to do save run for it.

284 Cancuc is not noted for any product. There are about the same
322 arts and industries as at other towns, but the only ones that amount to anything like a specialty are netmaking and whittling combs. The combs are better and more neatly made than those of the Bachajon, and with a selection of the wood for grain that often produces very pretty combinations. The nets are made by the men, who

[352]
[531]
←
[415]
→.

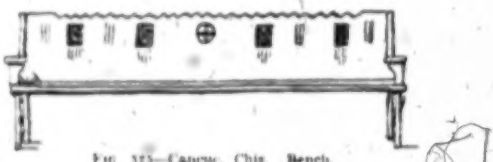

Fig. 315—Cancuc, Chis. Bench.

Fig. 317.
Cancuc, Chis.
Pottery, Hilte.
(8 c.m. high)

Fig. 318—Cancuc, Chis. Tall Jar. (1 m. high).

go about rolling the twine or knitting as they walk. The process was described in the last chapter.

485 Being on the main highway, the government maintains a long shed, like a wagon-shed, thatched with leaves and grass, which is at the disposal of travelers. This relieves the Maestro of duties of entertainment. Towards nightfall, various groups came into camp here, a family of Mexicans, with a big fire, and goods piled high, two traders with their packs, some Chamulas, fine-looking men dressed in white wool tunics, with flowing cotton kerchiefs round their heads, and a couple of Tenejapeños with nets full of apples. The Chamulas, who are remarkably progressive Indians, had come in with a string of mules. After dark, the line of fires in the divisions of the shed, the talk, the fire-lit figures in their varied costumes, with the Church and houses rising on the terraced hill behind made as picturesque and charming a scene as one could possibly imagine.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

342 177 178 434 of witchcraft. Today probably 95 percent of the new roofs are made of tile. Often the old roofs cannot be replaced with tile because the rafters were not built to support them. One result of the change has been the dependence on a carpenter to construct the gables, since they have to be lined up more accurately than they do with thatch or palm roofs. [335]

361 351 434 House lots in the town center are preferred to those on the margins. As residents of house sites on the ejido lands at the margins of the town acquire wealth, one of the first things they try to do is acquire a house closer to the plaza. These lots are smaller, averaging about 500 square meters, while those farther out average 900 square meters. In a sample measurement of 100 house lots, the size ranged from 180 to 1,440 square meters, and the average size was 77 square meters. Considering the advantages of a large lot in growing chile fruits and corn, the preference for smaller central lots reveals the strong prestige factor influencing choice. [564]

352 435 [513] House furnishings include both purchased and homemade items. Sleeping accommodations consist of wooden bedboards, either nailed on a frame or simply laid on blocks and covered with a straw mat. Woolen blankets from Comitán are sold locally at a price of 24 pesos or for 20 pesos in San Cristóbal and 18 pesos in Comitán. Most households own two or three wooden benches which line the walls of the porch and are made locally. Small chairs are purchased from Chamula carpenters at a cost of 2 to 4 pesos, as well as a small table costing about 4. A higher table is provided for the saints' pictures and candle holders, incense burner, and flower vases or tin cans. Hooks are fashioned from the crotch of trees and suspended on the house posts. Wooden boxes are bought from Ladino carpenters in San Cristóbal at a cost of 10 to 20 pesos depending on size and workmanship and are used to store clothing. In addition to the homemade water holders, water carriers, comales, strainers, and bowls, handmade glazed ware from San Cristóbal, factory-made porcelain dishes, metal cooking pots, knives, and spoons are purchased. Gourds provide serving ware for ceremonial occasions. Stone grinding platforms and rollers are purchased in San Cristóbal for about 10 pesos. Two new items have become increasingly popular in the past five years: a metal grinding machine for corn, hand operated and costing from 40 to 60 pesos depending on the size and quality, and a hinged press for tortillas, costing 15 pesos if made [708] [322] 415 435 439 [412] 435 415 177

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

dies, the owner announces on the loudspeaker of the local bars that he will sell meat at 5 pesos a portion. He preserves the hide to make saddle packs and tumplines. But the loss is great because he will not be able to buy a new bull with what he earns. If the bull lives, he will be better in three weeks and can carry loads. It is a very dangerous operation since the scrotum of a bull is very large. It is easier with a horse.

Surrounding the event with a ceremonial complex minimizes the development of commercialized relations between the caponizer and the owner. Most men who acquire several head of cattle or horses eventually learn to do the task themselves.

Handicrafts performed by men include rope-making from the tails of horses or from plant fibers, and weaving net bags. Most of the men who are assigned to the civil hierarchy spend their spare time in the cabildo making these items.

Carpentry is a skill now being practiced by two Indians of the town who "just learned by watching." They are called upon to help people in constructing the house frame, for which they receive 50 pesos in wages. A Ladino living on the margin of the town is a full-time specialist with his own shop. In addition to supervising house construction, he makes furniture and caskets to order.

New Economic Enterprises

In the operation of the new enterprises, which include cattle raising, cooperative ownership of a store, bars, and trucks, and liquor distilling, several patterns of organization have emerged. Some of these are based on preexisting social groupings, while others represent innovations. The social resources of management, credit operations, and the development of new skills within these local enterprises are of significance in preparing Indians for new occupations in the wider society.

Cattle raising. The most traditional organization is found in the case of cattle raising. Cattle have been in the town at least as far back as the 1915 revolutionary period when informants indicate that most of the